

Amendment to the Claims

Claim 1-6 (Canceled)

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7. (Currently Amended) An isolated and purified gene encoding *dep*, ~~the~~ a 4,5-dihydroxy-2-cyclopenten-1-one (DHCP) efflux protein, wherein said DHCP efflux protein comprises the amino acid sequence (SEQ ID No. 3).

8. (Currently Amended) The *dep* gene of Claim 7, wherein the *dep* gene is ~~from~~ native to *E. coli*, and wherein said *dep* gene confers resistance to DHCP or a functionally equivalent compound when present in multiple copies in a bacterial cell.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Amended) A plasmid comprising the gene encoding the DHCP efflux protein which comprises the amino acid sequence of (SEQ ID No. 3), which plasmid confers expression of multiple copies of the said gene in bacteria cells that have been transformed with said plasmid.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Amended) Bacteria cells containing the plasmid of Claim 10, which are resistant to DHCP.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (New) A method for conferring resistance to 4,5-dihydroxy-2-cyclopenten-1-one (DHCP) comprising:

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transforming bacterial cells with an isolated and purified gene encoding *dep*, wherein the *dep* is expressed in a sufficient amount to transport the DHCP out of said bacterial cell as fast or faster than said DHCP into said bacterial cell.
